

all, of those in the final legislation. So once again, the best ideas we get here come from home. I thank all of the committed education professionals and friends of special education who worked on it.

I am particularly pleased with the significant reforms which will focus special education on educating children with special needs, not simply complying with a system composed of intricate and complex regulatory and mountainous paperwork burdens.

Special education teachers, as I indicated, are leaving the profession out of frustration because of the unnecessary burden, and that is causing a chronic shortage. More time on paperwork means less time spent with students or preparing lessons for students. It is as simple as that. The numerous reforms in the bill will go a long way to free our time of special educators.

Again, my thanks to Senator GREGG and Senator KENNEDY, and on my on staff, Kara Vlasaty and Julie Jolly for helping us come up with an excellent product.

TRIBUTE TO KOMNINOS "GUS" KARELLAS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the other matter I need to speak to today is a very sad note. There is a funeral going on in my hometown of Mexico, MO, today, as we speak, for a very good friend of mine, Komninos "Gus" Karellas. There is a celebration of his life in a community which has mourned him in the last several days.

You heard on the floor from my colleague, Senator TALENT, words about Gus, a tremendous American success story. He was an immigrant from Greece. He came here with nothing 40 years ago. He started out working for others. He started out in California, came to Iowa, then Columbia, MO, and then moved with his wife to Mexico, MO, in 1970, to work in a steakhouse. A year later, they bought that steakhouse.

For the last 33 years, Gus Karellas's G&D Steakhouse has been the place to go for good steaks. I know it because I have been one of the frequent visitors there.

I came to know Gus as the community of Mexico, MO, came to know Gus. What a warm, genuine human being Gus Karellas was. He was a leader in his community. He helped charities like Boys Town. But he also did a wonderful thing in the community because he reached out to young people with difficulties, gave them opportunities as busboys and other jobs in his restaurant.

Unfortunately, the allegation in the police report was that it was one of those, or maybe several of those, who murdered him several nights ago to take the receipts from his business. We do not know what was in their troubled minds, but I can tell you that the community has lost a man of great dedication, great service.

Gus was a wonderful father. One of his sons, Nick Karellas, serves as a legislative assistant in my office. Another son, Andy, serves as a legislative assistant to Senator TALENT. JIM TALENT and I see every day the work ethic, the commitment, the dedication that Gus instilled in his children. He is a man who has left a very large mark on his community, and he has left a legacy that all of us can admire and recognize.

In the Omnibus appropriations bill that we will be passing today, there is a grant for a trail at Lakeview Park in Missouri. I suggest that the city fathers of my hometown consider naming that in honor of Gus Karellas to recognize not only his accomplishments but his contributions to the community and to his family.

I can only say that our thoughts and prayers are with the Karellas family. We join with the community in saluting his life, the great role model he was, the good he did for the community, and we will miss him sorely. They will also be in our thoughts and prayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for as much time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I want to share my views, as did Senator HUTCHISON and others, about our colleagues who are leaving for new adventures in life.

I wish all the best to Senator HOLLINGS. We will miss his booming voice. We will miss Senator EDWARDS, Senator GRAHAM of Florida, and Senator DASCHLE. We will also miss JOHN BREAU, a man we know will enjoy life with his good common sense and sense of humor. He is a good friend.

I want to speak about four others, though, including PETER FITZGERALD, whom I will miss. He will always be known for two ideas and principles of life—honesty and integrity. He has certainly fought hard for what he believed was right, and you can always trust his word.

BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL is a unique, proud leader of heritage. He is a man of principle. I look at BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL as one who runs on his own gear ratio. He is a character with character, whom I will certainly miss.

DON NICKLES—gosh, what a smart, principled leader. He will be missed. He is a taxpayer's hero. Last night, my wife and I enjoyed the Allen Jackson concert in DC. And that makes me think of country music. DON NICKLES is one of the reasons God made Oklahoma. We will miss DON NICKLES.

ZELL MILLER is probably the colleague that I have known the longest. He and I served at the same time as Governors of our respective States. He was always one of my role models. We got to know each other very well in the Southern Governors Association. Before I came to the Senate, one of the people who motivated me to go to the Senate was Paul Coverdell. ZELL took his seat and his office. When I came in, ZELL gave up that office, and now I am in ZELL MILLER's and Paul Coverdell's former office. I will think of ZELL a lot in the future. Two years ago, when ZELL announced his retirement, or that he was not going to run again, some were saying ZELL MILLER is a lame duck. Well, on this floor, at our convention in New York City, and throughout this fall, ZELL MILLER was anything but a lame duck. ZELL MILLER leaves office as a "mighty duck." We are going to certainly miss ZELL. We know he will stay active.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I want to discuss two important ideas and issues that are essential, I think, for America's future and our opportunities. First, I thank my colleagues in the House and the Senate for support of S. 150, the Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act.

Second, I want to discuss the significant advances in broadband Internet technologies over the past 8 years, particularly since the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

I thank the chairman of the Commerce Committee, Senator MCCAIN, and the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, for their continued leadership on the Internet tax moratorium. I have enjoyed working both with Chairman MCCAIN and Senator WYDEN over the years on numerous technology-related projects, such as nanotechnology, WiFi, unsolicited commercial e-mail, or SPAM and SPYWARE. They are great teammates on these telecommunications and technology issues, and I thank them.

Yesterday afternoon, the House of Representatives passed S. 150, the Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act, which cleared this important legislation for the President's signature later this year. As colleagues have heard me say on many occasions, the moratorium on Internet taxation has been one of my top legislative priorities since coming to the Senate. I have held this position since 1997, in my days as Governor of Virginia, when I was one of only four Governors to share the view in support of the visionary leadership of Congressman CHRIS COX and Senator WYDEN on this issue of Internet taxation.

I have consistently advocated policies and ideas that promote freedom and opportunity for all Americans. This legislation, S. 150, authored with Senator WYDEN, protects every American from harmful, regressive taxes on

Internet access, as well as from duplicative and predatory taxes on Internet transactions.

Today, the winners are the American people. I am very pleased to see that this measure was a victory for those of us who stand for freedom, opportunity, and prosperity, rather than more taxation and burdensome regulations of the Internet. This legislation is a real victory for American consumers, small businesses, rural Americans and, most important, low-income families. It is the result of a hard-fought success that extends the tax moratorium for another 4 years, from the time the last one expired until October 31, 2007.

Additionally, this legislation updates the previous moratorium to protect all types of Internet access platforms, including dial-up, satellite, cable modem service, DSL, wireless technology, and even next generation broadband networks, such as broadband over power lines.

Basic economics indicate that for every dollar of taxation added to the cost of Internet access, we can expect to see lost utilization of opportunities for the Internet for thousands of American families, especially those in rural areas and those of lower income.

With clear tax protection at the Federal level, S. 150 ensures that a complex, costly, and outdated telephone-like tax regime, which averages about 15 percent to 18 percent nationally, will not be imposed on Internet consumers. The guiding principle of the Internet tax moratorium has always been that the Internet should remain as accessible as possible to all people in all parts of the country forever. The Internet is one of our country's greatest innovations for individual empowerment, economic growth, and jobs.

So extending the tax moratorium and protecting all types of broadband technology platforms puts this country one step closer to closing the economic digital divide. The fact of the matter is—there are more Americans empowered by the Internet today, primarily because the Federal policy of the United States has consciously allowed Internet innovators, entrepreneurs, and consumers to remain free from burdensome, onerous taxation and unnecessary regulation.

I am honored that the majority of my colleagues in the Senate and the House have agreed to preserve this policy for another 4 years with the passage of S. 150. I thank all for their support.

BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I would now like to discuss the exciting changes that have taken place over the last 8 years in the telecommunications industry, in particular with regard to broadband Internet technologies.

As many of us know, the 1996 Telecommunications Act was the first major overhaul of the communications

policy in over 60 years. Since the passage of that law, remarkable changes have occurred in the technologies used to deliver telecommunications services. Some of these changes may be products of the 1996 act. However, many are due to the tremendous explosion of new and advanced broadband technologies.

Specifically, the Internet or digital technologies are replacing the slower legacy communications networks with multiple high-speed broadband platforms. For example, DSL, cable modems, 3G wireless, WiFi, ultrawide band, satellites, broadband over power lines, are all advanced communications networks delivering the same services and many more services, not just data, not just voice, but also video.

Broadband is widely considered the future of communications because it enhances the consumers' experience on the Internet and will have a tremendous impact on our country's economy.

By 2006, economists at the Brookings Institution estimate that widespread high-speed broadband Internet access would increase our national gross domestic product by \$500 billion annually.

The Internet and the broadband revolution are opening up a whole new world of opportunity that did not exist prior to the Telecommunications Act of 1996. By almost any measure, consumers are better off and have more choices now than ever before. These advancements have actually outpaced the laws and especially outpaced the economic regulations governing the communications industry because new Internet-enabled services do not easily fit into the stovepipe regulatory model of the 1996 act.

Unfortunately, the regulatory treatment of a given broadband provider depends on the particular platform that provider uses to offer their service. DSL providers are regulated entirely different from wireless broadband providers or cable modem service providers. All of these platforms deliver the same service—broadband Internet access. Yet all are regulated completely different from the other.

This type of regulatory regime picks technology winners and losers, creating, in my view, a competitive advantage for certain technology platforms over others. A number of my colleagues have called to revisit and potentially rewrite the telecommunications law, and I commend them for their leadership on these issues.

I believe any rewrite of the telecommunications law must take into account the transformative and positive impact broadband technologies have on the future of communications.

In considering what the next Telecommunications Act should look like, I am guided by a few foundational principles.

First, we should favor innovation and freedom over regulation. I call myself a commonsense Jeffersonian conservative. I trust free people, free enter-

prise, and free markets to allow them to innovate and create opportunities for all Americans to advance, compete, and succeed. Nowhere is this more true than with the Internet.

Restraining from regulating the economics of Internet applications has served consumers well with the advances in the Internet technologies, such as voice-over-IP or voice-over-Internet protocols. Entrepreneurs are a Web site away from offering phone services better than those offered by traditional telephone providers.

Virtually every consumer with broadband Internet access can now choose among potentially hundreds of telephone service providers. Internet applications are bringing new competition to old markets which means more innovation, lower prices, and higher quality of service for consumers who also can easily move to any other vendor if they get dissatisfied with any of those providers.

As elected leaders, we should ensure that our policies embrace and encourage this type of innovation and continued advancement.

Second principle: Support a competitive level playing field over fragmentation and ditches. As a former Governor of Virginia, I am an ardent supporter and believer in the principles of federalism. Our Founders, though, wisely realized, when constructing our Constitution, the importance of a coherent national policy regarding matters affecting interstate commerce.

Certainly, one of the great attributes of the Internet is that it is not limited by the boundaries of States or local governments. It is actually not even limited by the boundaries of countries. By its structure and unique architecture, it is clearly, though, interstate commerce and, indeed, international commerce.

I am reluctant to support policies that encourage the fragmentation of telecommunications regulation to State and local authorities, especially as communications transition to a digital format.

Third, and last, let's make sure we keep it clear and keep it certain. One of my biggest concerns with the 1996 Telecommunications Act is that it has brought forward a tremendous amount of litigation and legal uncertainty. This ongoing litigation and regulatory uncertainty has slowed the deployment and potentially stifled the advancement of future high-speed broadband networks. Any revision to the 1996 Telecommunications Act should contain clear, simple, coherent legislative principles that provide legal certainty and regulatory clarity for business models and also for the capital investment decisionmakers.

It has been the policy of the United States to promote the continued development and deployment of the Internet. The broadband revolution is bringing tomorrow's communications and commerce tools to more and more